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# THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL JOURNAL

CONTINUING "THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER"

## JANUARY 1915

### EDUCATIONAL NEWS AND EDITORIAL COMMENT

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The Department of Superintendence holds its annual meeting in Cincinnati during the week of February 22. A number of affiliated societies will meet with the general organization. **Chicago** This *Journal* takes the opportunity of announcing to **Dinner** all former students and graduates of the University of Chicago that there will be a Chicago dinner early in the week of the meeting. A special announcement of the place and time of this dinner will be posted in the hotels and places of meeting. Information can also be secured by writing directly to the University before the date of the meeting itself.

The first output of the Department of Educational Investigation and Measurement of Boston has appeared as School Document **Boston** No. 8, under the title, *Provisional Minimum and Supplementary Lists of Spelling Words for Pupils in Grades* **Department of** *I to VIII*. This document emphasizes the significance of the general movement which is going forward **Educational** in a number of the large cities of this country where bureaus of **Measurement** research are being organized as part of the office of superintendent of schools. The document further shows how scientific investigations can be made of immediate use to the school system. The first part of the pamphlet contains a summary of investigations on

spelling made in the Boston schools. The second part contains lists of words which are to be used in the different grades as spelling lessons. This fortunate combination of scientific work and practical suggestion is encouraging both to students of science who are interested in seeing the plan of investigation through the office of superintendents succeed, and also to teachers who are looking for practical results from the work of these bureaus.

We shall depart from our common practice of giving explicit information as to the source of a news item and print with names omitted a quotation from a city daily. The reason **How Superintendents Are Made** for printing this news note in this fashion is that it calls attention to a situation so common that the omission of names renders the news note interesting as a statement of a very general condition in the public schools of this country. Why superintendents should be willing to accept positions under conditions like those described in this clipping when a little co-operative organization would tend to clear up the situation is a continual source of surprise to anyone who is in contact with school people.

#### WILL THE HANDS OF THE NEW SUPERINTENDENT BE FREE?

For the first time in many months the Board of Education seemed to reach a point Saturday night when its members were agreed. By a unanimous vote they selected a superintendent who will begin his duties shortly. The loud praises the members of the board have for the new man would indicate that they believe they have found a superintendent who, like Mr. ———, understands his business.

Mr. ——— comes with fine recommendations. His experience has been extended for a man of forty. He should be able to do much for bettering the standing of ——— schools, the rejuvenation of which was started by Mr. ———. Owing to the fact that the latter was determined to manage the schools, to pass upon the ability of the teachers in the schools, and that, despite the chance of losing the support of some of the members, he continued to follow a course which was contrary to their wishes, he lost his position. Under this trying situation Mr. ——— steps in. If he has the make-up of a genuine superintendent he will not permit himself to be dictated to by members of the board, not one of whom is an expert in educational matters.

The old board members made the error, considered hurtful to the welfare of the schools, of thinking that after they hired a superintendent they could

dictate to him as to how the schools should be managed. The position the board took was contrary to custom in other cities. A superintendent of schools is supposed to be a manager, and not a piece of dough in the hands of a school board. If the present board is made up of the same class of material as the old board, with ideas of the same sort, Mr. ——— can figure at the outset that he is going to have a hard row to hoe just as soon as he clashes with the ideas of the members of the board. If Mr. ——— finds the new board of the same caliber as the old, it is hoped he will not play policy in order to make a good fellow of himself and retain his job. He will not be serving the people of ——— as he should if he pursues that course.

All of the members should give Mr. ——— a free hand to raise the standard of the schools of ———. If he is the man for that purpose, as the members say he is, they will not follow the policy of dictating to him or hampering him when he has an idea of his own to develop to the advantage of the school system.

The reorganization of state teachers' associations is going forward very rapidly. A number of these associations have organized themselves as corporations. Some have permanent secretaries to take care of the interests of teachers in the state. The following resolutions adopted by the Indiana State Teachers' Association, together with the notes of the committee reporting on the plan, present one case of a reorganization under the district plan:

WHEREAS, The scientific study and investigation of educational problems has become a necessity, and

WHEREAS, The multiplicity of larger meetings which we now have does not furnish adequate opportunity for such study, therefore be it

*Resolved*, That we adopt the following

#### PLAN OF ORGANIZATION OF THE STATE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

##### A. STATE MEETING

That a two-day meeting of the Association be held annually in the city of Indianapolis in the month of October.

1. The first day and the first evening to be given to section meetings. The main purpose of these meetings to be the presentation and discussion of reports of work done under the district organization, as indicated below (B 1).

These sessions to give wider opportunity for discussion and criticism of the field work being done in the different districts; to secure state organization of the field work on a given problem; and to prevent unnecessary duplication.

2. The sessions of the second day and of the second evening to be general sessions and the speakers to be selected on account of extraordinary ability in

their respective lines of educational investigation, study, or accomplishments. The purpose to be the broader consideration of educational topics of general interest.

#### B. DISTRICT MEETINGS

1. The state to be divided into districts, using the present congressional districts as nearly as may be practicable; the teachers of each district, in so far as their interests incline them, to organize for the study of specific problems in education. Such study to be carried on during the school year by individuals or groups in co-operative investigation or experiment.

2. A district meeting to be held annually, preferably in late spring, for the purpose of hearing and discussing reports; for the discussion of new specific topics and the setting and assignment of new problems for study. This annual meeting to furnish a "clearing-house" opportunity.

3. Reports of studies, research, etc., when approved by a committee to be appointed by the State Association, to be recommended for publication and distribution by the State Association.

Also be it further

*Resolved*, That as a part of this plan the General Association appoint each year a Committee on Resolutions, whose duty shall be to report at the next annual meeting on any needed change in, or additions to, the Association's policy or principles; to present larger problems that concern the Association; to study the larger work and welfare of the Association. This committee to consist of five members of the Association.

#### COMMITTEE'S NOTES ON THE PLAN

1. The plan here proposed is made for the one purpose of giving opportunity for co-operative, systematic, and scientific study of education.

2. Several returns objected to the "district" plan because not all teachers are interested in scientific investigation and experiment. This is also the view of the committee. The idea of the district meeting is to break the body of teachers of a district into small working groups, each member of each group to be present at the meeting because of his genuine interest in the specific problem of his group. By this system of grouping, the teachers grade themselves by interest and ability. It is even desirable that the groups in very many instances should be small, so that the group may form a more effective working body.

3. The "district" lines are not meant to be rigid. The congressional districts are used because such division gives groupings of fair size for working bodies, and because it is the most satisfactory division the committee could devise.

The Superintendents' Association of Indiana, working on the problem of the county institutes, plans to render these institutes more systematic by having a textbook which shall be assigned early in the year and shall be made the subject of study on the part of the teachers before they come to the institute. The plan, as adopted by the superinten

**Reorganizing  
Institutes**

ents, is too long to print in full. Certain of its essential elements, however, can be briefly outlined by quoting the following paragraphs:

#### PLAN OF PROCEDURE

1. The textbooks should be purchased and at least carefully read before the week of county institute.

2. The instructor should furnish to each teacher, on the first morning of the institute, outlines of the week's work, the outlines to be based on the books chosen.

3. In following the outline of the text dealing with general principles, discussions should be given before the institute as a body, for economy of time, if nothing more.

4. If possible, these general lectures should be followed by section meetings, in which specific and practical application of general principles to the problem in hand is made. This is perhaps best accomplished, generally, by lectures and conferences.

5. If possible, there should be an examination and correction of notebooks at the end of the week, not for the purpose of grading, but to help the teachers.

6. During the year following this work in institute the teachers should make systematic study of the problems from the texts and notes, and in connection with their actual school work.

The State Department of Education of New Jersey has been conducting tests on the relative efficiency of school children in the cities and rural districts of that state. The following quotation from *Educational Bulletin*, Vol. I, No. 3, together with the comments of explanation from the Commissioner's office, throw a good deal of light on the condition of rural schools. The table which is referred to in the text is not quoted in full because of its length. The facts, however, come out in the brief summaries which are given in the quotation:

**Efficiency in  
City Schools  
and Rural  
Schools**

The table shows that in every subject in which eighth-grade pupils were tested pupils in cities made uniformly higher averages than pupils outside of cities.

For example, in arithmetic more than 42 per cent of city pupils received 90 points or more, and in the territory outside of cities only a little more than 34 per cent received 90 points or more. On the other hand, of those who received 69 points or less in arithmetic 22 per cent were in the territory outside of cities and only 17 per cent in cities.

Even in spelling the city pupils outranked pupils in country schools. In the cities more than 65 per cent received 90 points or more, whereas only

51 per cent in the territory outside of cities received 90 points or more. Of the pupils who received 69 per cent or less in spelling less than one-half of 1 per cent were in cities and about 1 per cent in the territory outside of cities.

How may we account for these differences in the results obtained by pupils in city schools and those in the territory outside of cities? There are, of course, many good teachers in the rural schools. The differences in results noted cannot be explained by difference in the natural ability of the children. How, then, can this difference be accounted for?

It is believed that the answer is found in the differences in school opportunity that children have. The plain fact is that some of the rural schools suffer from the following causes:

1. Poorly equipped and poorly trained teachers.
2. Too frequent changes in teachers. More than half the teachers in one-room schools in some counties are changed every year.
3. Poor attendance. In too many schools attendance is not only irregular, but there is much unnecessary and prolonged absence. No teacher can teach the children if the children are not in school.
4. In ungraded schools the teacher has too many classes to teach.
5. In many schools there is a sad lack of equipment and apparatus for teaching.
6. There is often a lack of enthusiasm and interest in the smaller schools which is found in larger schools.
7. Lack of adequate, helpful, constructive supervision of instruction for those teachers who need it most. The county superintendent cannot give an adequate amount of supervision.

The following extract from a letter written by the director of the Bureau of Information, Statistics, and Educational Research of Oakland, California, describes the progress of research under the direction of this Bureau:

**The Oakland  
Bureau of  
Research**

I believe that the most important thing the Bureau has accomplished since its organization is the interesting of the principals of the city in the scientific study of school problems.

The elementary-school principals of the city have organized themselves into a Principals' Study Club and have adopted as their program for the year the study of the subjects of the school curriculum. It is their opinion that the prime function of the school principal is supervision, and so they are going to try to find out what a principal ought to know concerning each school subject.

The first subject to be studied was spelling. They have reviewed all of the best literature on the subject, have had reports on leading experimental studies, and have conducted some studies of their own. The final culmination of the plan was the undertaking of a wholesale study of the teaching of the subject throughout the city, the various factors involved, and a number of other

matters which will be used as a basis for investigating the other school subjects in the various schools. For their direction in this work, they secured the services of Professor J. B. Sears of Stanford University.

Professor Sears donates his time to the city, and uses the city as a sort of laboratory for his students who are studying various phases of education. The data gathered together in the Oakland spelling test have been divided up into several minor studies, each of which has been assigned to a student who is interested in that particular phase of the problem. Twenty-five students came up from Stanford, a distance of nearly 50 miles, on the day of the test to see that the conditions were kept as uniform as possible. The School of Education of the University of California also co-operated, nearly forty students from this institution donating their services on the day of the test.

We hope soon to have some results for publication.

The State University of Missouri has a fund of \$10,000 which it is spending in attempting to give the boys and girls in the rural common schools of that state as much advantage from the agricultural work at the state university as it is possible to supply with this fund of money. An officer has been appointed by the state university, whose business it is to organize throughout the state various clubs and associations and to supply the children of the rural schools with as much reading-matter and concrete material as can be sent out from the university.

This is another example of the way in which the great universities of this country are accomplishing the purpose which was explicitly adopted by the University of Michigan at the time of its organization, when this institution declared its purpose of becoming a part of the common-school system of the state. If more institutions would realize that the interests of the university are rooted in the common schools as well as in the high schools, great advantage would come to the whole school system and the university itself.

A circular issued by the Bureau of Education gives in full the recently adopted program of studies for the public schools of Oakland, California. This program is worth reproducing because it shows very definitely the tendency which has been commented on before in the *Journal* toward the introduction into the elementary schools of a program which shall modify radically the work of the upper grades. The

**Junior  
High-School  
Courses**



large amount of elective work which is provided in the seventh and eighth grades of the Oakland schools by this new program is distinctly in keeping with the movement going on all over the country to develop junior high schools.

The following time schedule in hours per week has been adopted recently in the schools of Oakland, California:

Subjects	Grade							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
English and penmanship . . . . .	15	15	15	10	9	9	5	8
Arithmetic . . . . .	2	3	5	5	5	5	3	3
History and geography . . . . .				5	5	5	5	5* 2½†
Nature-study, physical training, and hygiene . . . . .	1	1	1	1	1	1		2½‡
Music: Vocal, or band, or orchestra . . . . .	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Drawing . . . . .	1	1	1	1	1	1	2§ or 5	2§ or 5
Manual training . . . . .	1	1	1	1	2	2	2§ to 10	2§ to 10
Science . . . . .							5§	5§
Literature, or Latin, or French, or German, or Spanish, or Italian . . . . .					5	5	5§	5§
Typing . . . . .								5§
Unassigned . . . . .	3	2						
Total . . . . .	25	25	25	25	25 or 30	25 or 30	25 or 30	25 or 30

\* First term, history and geography.

† Second term, civics.

‡ Second term.

§ Electives 10 or 15 hours, to be chosen from subjects marked §.

|| Modern languages, elective, at present offered only in the university school.

We are very glad to give currency to the following communication, which comes from the National Child Labor Committee with the plea that it be published in the *Journal*:

#### Child Labor

The first social Sunday in the New Year is Child Labor Sunday, which has been observed for the past eight years, and which falls in 1915 on January 24. In issuing its appeal for the observance of the day the National Child Labor Committee refers to the fact that nearly half of all the children ten to thirteen years of age in three southern states are at work instead of in school. In spite of the rapid progress in legislation between 1900 and 1910, the Thirteenth Census reports that nearly 100,000 children ten to thirteen years of age were at work in non-agricultural

occupations throughout the country in 1910, or considerably more than half of the number of such working children in 1900.

One of the Committee's investigators this fall found in a North Carolina mill two little spinners whose grandmother said that they were six and seven years old, and scores of older children at work below the legal age limit, which is thirteen years in that state. Canneries in New York state have persisted in violating the child-labor law, because the state Department of Labor has found it impossible to get judgment in local courts against canners who employ small children. Moreover, there are still six states in the Union with no fourteen-year limit whatever for children at work in factories, six states with no compulsory school attendance law, and fifteen states whose fourteen-year limit for factories is practically nullified by exemptions.

For these reasons, and others, the National Child Labor Committee is asking that special attention be given on Child Labor Day to the Palmer-Owen bill now pending in Congress. It has been favorably reported by the House Committee on Labor, so that it is on the House Calendar for the present session, and there is reason to hope that it will also come to a vote in the Senate. This bill, which has received the indorsement of prominent men of all political parties, proposes a fourteen-year age limit in all factories, mills, canneries, and workshops manufacturing goods for interstate commerce; an eight-hour day and no night work for children fourteen to sixteen years old in the same occupations; and a sixteen-year limit for mines and quarries.

But besides working for the Palmer-Owen bill, the Committee is continuing its campaign for improved state laws, since the federal bill contains only the basic standards and, moreover, cannot regulate those forms of child labor in which interstate commerce is not involved. The Illinois law, for instance, already contains the four provisions of the federal bill, but allows boys of sixteen to work as night messengers, and has no age limit whatever for boys and girls in other street trades; while immigrant children of fourteen may go to work without a knowledge of English, provided they can read and write in their native tongue. Iowa does not require work permits at all, but throws the burden of proving the child's age upon the employer. Maine and West Virginia have a 14-year limit for factories but not for stores, and no higher age limit for the commonly specified dangerous occupations.

Other state laws have similar defects, which can be regulated only by the states themselves. The National Child Labor Committee will try to secure improved child-labor laws in fifteen states this year, and believes that the 12,000 clergymen, school superintendents, and teachers from every state in the Union who co-operate in the observance of Child Labor Day are among its most powerful allies in securing legislation, whether state or federal. Those who wish to observe Child Labor Day in their churches or schools can obtain literature on the subject, free of charge, from the National Child Labor Committee, 105 East 22d Street, New York City.